I Will Fill This House with Glory

Haggai 2:1-23

Key Verse: 2:7 “I will shake all nations, and what is desired by all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the LORD Almighty.”

The book of Haggai is composed of four messages of God to the Israelites through Haggai. In chapter one there is the first message which we studied last week: Give careful thought to your ways. God encouraged them to repent of their selfishness and rebuild the temple of God as their priority. God’s message encourages us also to give careful thought to our ways and repent. In chapter two there appear three more messages to the Israelites. Let’s pay attention to what God is going to say to them and to us.

First, God’s second message: Be strong (1-9) 50 days passed since God gave his first message to Zerubbabel, governor of Israel, Joshua, the high priest, and all the Israelites. (1:1, 2:1) God appeared to Haggai again with his second message. Look at verses 3-5. “***Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing? But now be strong, Zerubbabel,’ declares the LORD. ‘Be strong, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land,’ declares the LORD, ‘and work. For I am with you,’ declares the LORD Almighty. ‘This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear***.” God’s second message was ‘Be strong’, ‘Be strong.’ and ‘Be strong!’ Why did God repeat the same message, ‘Be strong’ three times? Through God’s first message, Zerubbabel, Joshua, and all the returned Israelites repented and began to rebuild the temple. They went up to the mountain, cutting timber, rolling stones, and worked hard day and night. However, they could not hide their inner fear while they were working. The opposition and persecution from their enemies must have been restarted. The demand from their own business and work for their own houses also became a burden to them. Above all, doubt must have been their main issue. “Do we need to rebuild the temple? We have been serving the LORD for the last 60 years without the temple and had no problem. Why do we sacrifice our time and money to rebuild the temple?” Today some may ask the same question. “Do we need to go to church on Sunday? God is everywhere, not only in church!” Three years ago, God gave COVID to us as a testing stone. During the COVID period many Christians stopped coming to church to keep social distance. But after the COVID many of them did not come back to church.

# The LORD Almighty repeated his message again, “Be strong. I am with you. My Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.” Earlier than the day of Haggai, God gave the same message to General Joshua and his people just before they entered the Promised Land. Even though they came out of Egypt through God's eagle’s wings, they were afraid of their enemies. God rebuked their unbelief and encouraged them to trust in him. “*Be strong and very courageous...Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.*” (Jos 1:7,9) God said that he would be with his people wherever they go. Being with us is God’s part and being strong is our part. We do not need to ask God to be with us. We need to be with him. During the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln and the Union confronted a strong opposition from the Confederate. One of Abraham’s aids asked the president. “Please ask God to stand on our side.” Mr. Abraham said, “My concern is not whether God is on our side; my greatest concern is to be on God's side, for God is always right.” As the president said, we need to stand on God’s side. We need to be strong believing that God is always right, and that he is always on our side.

# In his first inaugural speech in 1932, President Franklin Roosevelt said to the people of America, ‘The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” In the middle of The Great Depression, the president encouraged Americans to regain their faith and hope to overcome the national crisis. Under the leadership of the president Americans worked hard and overcame the Great Depression, and now America became a superpower nation in this century. God did not give us the spirit of timidity (fear), but the spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline. (2 Ti 1:7) Do you know which words Jesus talked to his disciples most during his lifetime? It is “Don’t be afraid!” Jesus said this to his fearful disciples more than 18 times in the four gospels. I pray that we may become strong and seek first his kingdom and his righteousness instead of worrying about what to eat, what to wear, and how to survive.

Now look at verses 6-9. “***This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations, and what is desired by all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the LORD Almighty. The silver is mine and the gold is mine,’ declares the LORD Almighty. The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,’ says the LORD Almighty.’ And in this place I will grant peace,’ declares the LORD Almighty.***” The words ‘shaking the heavens and the earth’ means that God will judge this world. God will judge all kings and kingdoms of the world for the sake of the coming Messiah. ‘What is desired by all nations’ indicates the appearance of the Messiah. When the Messiah comes, the glory of the LORD Almighty will be restored. God said, “I will fill this house with glory.” The glory of the temple was more than we could imagine. Not only the beauty and majesty from outward appearance, but also the holiness and deity of the sanctuary were overwhelming. The whole building was made of white marbles and gold. The glory of the LORD Almighty was filled in this house of God. God promised to fill this house with his glory again. The glory of this building-to-be will be greater than the glory of the former house, which indicates ‘Solomon’s temple. God said that he would grant peace in this house. There will be no more war and hostility between God and men.

This promise about the glory of the LORD Almighty was fulfilled with Jesus Christ, not with the temple of Zerubbabel. The temple of Zerubbabel was destroyed by the Romans AD 70. The glory of the LORD Almighty was filled and completed in Jesus and through Jesus. Jesus himself is the temple and he himself is glory. In John 3:19 Jesus said, “*Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days,*” John who heard Jesus’ words came to realize later that the temple Jesus had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. (Jn 3:21-22) Jesus is the glory of the temple. He is the glory of the One and Only Son. John said, “*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*” (Jn 1:14) We celebrate Christmas this year. Let us pray that God may fill our worship place with his glory, more glory than last year. Even though we worship the same place, we pray that God may fill us with greater glory than last year. Jesus was born to reveal the Father’s glory. He also died to reveal the Father’s glory. Through his obedient death on the cross Jesus revealed God’s glory and restored our glory. Jesus prayed right before he was crucified in John 17:1, “*Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.*” Amen! Let us pray that the glory of the Son, the glory of the LORD Almighty may be fully revealed through this Christmas worship service. Let us pray that the name of Jesus Christ may be highly exalted through Ben West’s message and all our program. Last Thanksgiving night our coworkers gathered at msn. Abraham’s house and practiced chorus, ‘Hallelujah.’ God blessed our practice, and we showed progress each time. May God richly bless our music offerings to glorify the name of Jesus and the LORD Almighty.

God said that he would grant peace. Ephesians 2:14 says, “*For he (Jesus) himself is our peace, who has made two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the diving wall of hostility.*” Amen! I ask and pray that Jesus may give us peace, reconciling peace during this Christmas season. Do you have anyone who you stand against? Do you have anyone who divides you from the presence of God? Forgive them and be forgiven, so that the peace of God may fill your heart. Jesus himself is your peace because he died for your sins and died to forgive others’ sin. Jesus was born for our peace, peace between God and you and between you and your enemy. God promised you, “I will grant peace in you!” Amen!

Second, God’s third message (Give careful thought) In verses 10-19 God shows two illustrations to Haggai and the priests so that they might repent of their sins and turn to the LORD Almighty. Two months passed since the second message had been delivered to Haggai. God showed two illustrations: First, which one makes us defile between touching a fold that contains consecrated meat or touching a dead body? The priests answered, “touching a dead body.” (13) Here we learn that sin spreads faster than holiness in us. It is easier and faster to become sinners than saints. God replied in verse 14. “***So it is with this people and this nation in my sight,’ Whatever they do and whatever they offer there is defiled***.”

God warned them to give their careful thought when they lay one stone after another for the foundation of the temple. They measured some amount for harvest, but they didn’t get as they expected because of corruption. God didn’t bless them. They were like immature vine, fig tree, pomegranate, and olive trees, which represents the nation of Israel. God will bless them again when they repent and turn to the LORD Almighty. We must give careful thought to what we are doing. As we studied last week, we must check if our job, our mission, our plan is to glorify God and please him or not. If not, repent and turn to the LORD Almighty. Amen!

Third, the fourth message (I will make you like my signet ring) The fourth message of God was delivered on the same day to Haggai. The message was that God would judge this world again and raise Zerubbabel as a man with his signet ring. Look at verse 23. “***On that day,’ declares the LORD Almighty,’ I will take you, my servant Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will make you like my signet ring, for I have chosen you,’ declares the LORD Almighty.***” Making a person like his signet ring means that God will make him his heir. In ancient days a signet ring represented a person’s identity, authority, right, fame, and power. In the book of Esther King Xerxes honored Mordecai and gave him his signet ring. (Es 8:2) The LORD Almighty would honor Zerubbabel because he chose him. In Romans 8:17 Paul said that if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. We become honored as heirs because we are chosen, chosen by God through Jesus Christ. We don’t deserve God’s grace, but we received his grace because of the Son Jesus Christ.

In conclusion as a chosen people, as men and women of God’s signet ring, let us become strong and work. Be strong and work for the glory of the LORD Almighty. Let us pray that his house may be filled with God’s glory. Let us pray that God’s glory may fill our Christmas worship service more and greater than last year. Next year we are preparing for the coming ISBC. The title of the conference is ‘For His Glory”. Let us pray and work hard for his glory and for the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen!

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